

Message Text

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SUBJECT: GENERAL ELECTION - NO. 2 - FACTS AND FIGURES

REF: COPENHAGEN 3443

SUMMARY. AS DANISH ELECTORAL SYSTEM FAVORS REPRESENTATION
BY A LARGE NUMBER OF PARTIES, THERE IS LITTLE PROSPECT
THAT THE JAN 9 ELECTION WILL DO MUCH TO REDUCE THE PRESENT
ELEVEN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT. OF THE FIVE NEW PARTIES
WHICH GAINED REPRESENTATION IN THE DECEMBER 1973 ELECTION,
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ONLY THE JUSTIC PARTY IS IN REAL DANGER OF PARLIAMENTARY

ELIMINATION. DUE TO THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY MOST OF THE ACTUAL CAMPAIGN WILL BE TELESKOPE INTO THE TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ELECTION JAN 9 WILL SELECT 175 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FROM METROPOLITAN DENMARK'S THREE ELECTORAL REGIONS; FROM GREATER COPENHAGEN - 24; FROM THE ISLANDS (WHICH INCLUDES THE REST OF ZEALAND, FYN, BORNHOLM, LOLLAND, ETC.) - 70; AND FROM JUTLAND - 81. ELECTIONS WILL ALSO TAKE PLACE JAN 9 IN GREENLAND (2 SEATS) AND THE FAEROES (2 SEATS) FOR THE NON-METROPOLITAN MEMBERS OF THE 179-MEMBER PARLIAMENT.

2. WITH THE VOTING AGE NOW AT 20, APPROXIMATELY 3.5 MILLION OUT OF THE 5 MILLION DANES WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE. ASSUMING THE 86 TO 89 PERCENT VOTER PARTICIPATION RATE REGISTERED IN THE LAST SIX PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, THE TOTAL VOTE CAST SHOULD RUN ABOUT 3.1 MILLION (AN AVERAGE OF APPROXIMATELY 18,000 VOTES WILL BE REQUIRED TO WIN ONE SEAT).

3. CONTESTING THE ELECTION WILL BE ELEVEN PARTIES; TEN PRESENTLY REPRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (46 SEATS IN DEC 1973 ELECTION), PROGRESS PARTY (28), LIBERALS (22), RADICALS (20) CONSERVATIVES (16) CENTER DEMOCRATS (14) SOCIALIST PEOPLES PARTY (11) CHRISTIAN PEOPLES PARTY (7) COMMUNISTS (6) AND JUSTICE PARTY (5) AND THE LEFT SOCIALISTS WHICH FAILED TO WIN REPRESENTATION IN 1973. THE INDEPENDENT PARTY, PRESENTLY REPRESENTED IN THE FOLKETING BY BIRGIT BUSK AFTER HER DEFECTION FROM MOGENS GLISTRUP'S PROGRESS PARTY, HAS NOT SUCCEEDED IN FILING THE 17,447 SIGNATURES (1/175 OF THE TOTAL VOTE CAST IN THE LAST ELECTION) TO QUALIFY FOR PARTICIPATION. NOR HAS THE PEOPLES UNION, ANOTHER SMALL SPLINTER GROUP FROM THE PROGRESS PARTY, THE SCHLESWIG PARTY, REPRESENTING THE GERMAN-SPEAKING MINORITY IN SOUTHERN JUTLAND, IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE ITS ELECTION ALLIANCE WITH THE CENTER DEMOCRATS RATHER THAN RUN AS AN INDEPENDENT PARTY.

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4. THE DANISH ELECTORAL SYSTEM, BUILT ON THE STANDARD D'HONDT PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATIONAL MODEL, TENDS TO FAVOR REPRESENTATION BY SMALL PARTIES. ANY PARTY OBTAINING OVER TWO PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VOTE (APPROXIMATELY 62,000 VOTES) IS ASSURED OF A MINIMUM OF FOUR SEATS. ELECTORAL POLL RESULTS OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS SUGGEST THAT THE LEFT SOCIALISTS WILL AGAIN FAIL TO GAIN THE REQUIRED TWO PERCENT. OF THOSE PARTIES PRESENTLY IN PARLIAMENT,

THE JUSTICE PARTY MIGHT WELL BE ELIMINATED AND ERHARD
JAKOBSEN'S CENTER DEMOCRAT PARTY IS IN THE DANGER ZONE.

5. THE ELEVEN PARTIES WILL RUN A TOTAL OF APPROXIMATELY 1,200
CANDIDATES OF WHICH 15 TO 20 PERCENT WILL BE WOMEN.

OF THE 175 MEMBERS ELECTED IN 1973, 26 OR 14.9 PERCENT
WERE WOMEN. THE ELECTION SYSTEM PERMITS THE VOTER TO
CAST HIS BALLOT FOR AN INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATE OR A PARTY
IN GENERAL. BALLOTS CAST FOR INDIVIDUALS HAVE USUALLY
RANGED FROM 40 TO 50 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL WITH THE
COMMUNIST PARTY CASTING THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF THESE
"PERSONAL" VOTES (AVERAGE 55 PERCENT) AND THE PROGRESS
PARTY THE LOWEST (28 PERCENT IN 1973)

6. ALTHOUGH THE GALLUP POLLS OVER THE PAST
MONTHS INDICATE ELECTION RESULTS THAT ARE NOT
FAR DIFFERENT FROM THOSE A YEAR AGO
(THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE IS THE SUBSTANTIALLY BETTER
POSITION OF THE GOVERNING LIBERAL PARTY), A RECENT
INVESTIGATION OF VOTER STABILITY IN DENMARK INDICATES
THAT ONE-THIRD, OR OVER ONE MILLION VOTERS, HAVE SHIFTED
THEIR POLITICAL PREFERENCE DURING THE INTERVENING YEAR.
THE TWO PARTIES WHOSE SUCCESS OR FAILURE WILL BE CRITICAL
IN THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION, THE LIBERALS AND THE SOCIAL
DEMOCRATS, HAVE THE FIRMEST SUPPORT WITH RESPECTIVELY
94 AND 92 PERCENT OF THEIR 1973 VOTERS REMAINING LOYAL.
THE THIRD PARTY WHOSE FATE WILL BE IMPORTANT IN THE
ELECTION, GLISTRUP'S ANTI-TAX PROGRESS PARTY, COMMANDS
THE LOYALTY OF 57 PERCENT OF ITS EARLIER VOTERS. ITS
TOTAL ELECTORAL SUPPORT, HOWEVER, HAS SLIPPED ONLY 2 - 3
PERCENTAGE POINTS - FROM 15.9 A YEAR AGO TO APPROXIMATELY
13 TO 14 PERCENT AT PRESENT.

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7. ALTHOUGH THE PARTY CANDIDATES WILL BE ACTIVE IN
THEIR LOCAL ELECTORAL DISTRICTS THROUGHOUT THE FIVE-WEEK
ELECTION PERIOD, THE INTERVENTION OF THE CHRISTMAS
HOLIDAYS WILL COMPRESS THE MAJOR PART OF THE CAMPAIGN
TO THE TWO WEEKS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING ELECTION DAY.
WITH TELEVISION PLAYING AN INCREASINGLY SIGNIFICANT ROLE,
THE PARTIES HAVE FOUGHT HARD WITHIN THE DANISH BROADCASTING
COUNCIL FOR PREFERRED BROADCASTING TIME. THE SCHEDULE
AS NOW RELEASED CALLS FOR A TWO-HOUR, ALL-PARTY
INTRODUCTORY DEBATE THE EVENING OF DEC 22, FOLLOWED BY
INDIVIDUAL PARTY PRESENTATIONS (WITH SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONING
OF PARTY REPRESENTATIVES BY A PANEL OF JOURNALISTS) DURING
THE AFTERNOONS AND EVENINGS FROM DEC 27 THROUGH JAN 6,
WITH A CONCLUDING THREE-HOUR WIND-UP DEBATE BY PARTY

LEADERS JANUARY 7.
DUNNIGAN

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